A Cross Sectional Study of Dynamics of Sibling Relationships

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Section -1

Introduction

Human life is a precious divine gift given to everyone, in which they want true happiness and need to be felt important by being surrounded with peoples. It implies that human relationships play a vital role in deriving happiness, satisfaction, comfort and support in life. Just after the birth, one starts developing a bond with mother. This bond turns into relationship with the caregiver which remains important throughout life. Later he develops relationships with other people significant in his life. A relationship, in psychological perspective, refers to a particular type of connection, usually an unbroken alliance between two or more individuals which is influenced by each other's feelings, behaviors, and personality traits, physical and mental well-being. There are a number of relationships an individual builds in life; the most important are family relationships, where sibling relationships last almost throughout the life span. A sibling is an individual who shares common parents. A female sibling is a *sister* and a male sibling is a *brother*. Siblings have an exclusive role in each other's lives which simulates with the companionship of parents as well as of friends. Siblings spend a long period of their lives together. While one might spend forty to fifty years with one's parents, life with a sibling can last sixty to eighty years **(Bank & Kahn, 1997).**

Sibling relationship are groomed and modified on the basis of accrued issues of early life that include jealousy, arguments, role transitions, demands, privileges, responsibilities assigned and discrimination perceived at the hand of parents and other significant others.

Television programs mostly endorse the model of ideal and traditional family that has fewer conflicts, the emphasis generally is to solve the conflicts and maintain positive emotional ties. Some of the media programs characterize the hostile sibling relationships, which however end with a subtle moral of disadvantage of such relationship; however the underlying message portrays importance of supportive relationships.

There is a variation in the context and content of sibling relationship across the cultures. In western cultures sibling relationship tends to be identified by biological criteria and it is typically less important than the spousal or parent-child relationship. People are supposed to be in contact and cooperate with their siblings without having it as an obligation. Older siblings in these cultures are rarely given responsibilities to take care of the younger sibling, and that is only occasional, with parents taking on the primary role of caretaker. In contrast, close sibling relationships in Indian cultures are a strong cultural norm prompting cooperation. A sibling may be more important than a spouse; in others, cousins may be considered siblings **(Adams 1999).** In India, the sibling relationship is so cherished that a festival is held in observance called Rakhi. At this celebration, the sister presents the brother with a woven bracelet to show her lasting bond. Older siblings extend care giving roles to younger siblings.

Section -2

Background and conceptual framework

2.1 Sibling Relationships in developmental stages

The role of siblings in one another's everyday experiences is manifested as companions, confidantes, combatants, and as the focus of social comparisons. Considering the closeness in age and early association of siblings, they can bond for a lifetime. Beyond the mother-child dyad, sibling associations are attributed with determining cognitive faculties, emotional balance, self-sufficiency, and peer interactions. In each developmental period relationship with sibling varies which is described below-

2.1.1 Infancy & Early childhood: The relationships of siblings at infancy stage have not been studied elaborately. In addition, siblings are not accommodating to each other during this period. However, during early childhood they begin to show interest and interact with their siblings both younger and older to them in age. Much of their interactions are determined by extraneous factors.

Moreover their relationships with mothers are of great importance and therefore their sibling relationship also affected by parents to a great extent. Developmentalists studying the interaction patterns of preschool children and their infant siblings report that the arrival of a newborn in the family has immediate consequences for older siblings' adjustment and behavior. Bed-wetting, withdrawal, aggressiveness, dependency, and anxiety are among the most problematic behaviors associated in middle childhood sibling studies **(Dunn 1995).**

2.1.2 Late childhood: In this stage, siblings play an important role in the development of children's understanding of others' minds, emotions, thoughts, intentions and beliefs. Siblings seem to demonstrate an understanding of others' minds and emotions during real-life interactions long before they show this understanding on more formal situations. Brothers and sisters tend to influence each other's gender role development. Boys with sisters score higher on expressiveness than boys with brothers, and girls with brothers score higher on competitiveness and assertiveness **(Sulloway 1996).**

2.1.3Adolescence: During early adolescence, an individual may begin to distance from the younger siblings, especially those siblings in the early and middle childhood years. During this stage, the interests change and become mature; they may no longer feel that they have anything in common with their younger siblings. Moreover, adolescents may become increasingly annoyed with their younger siblings' efforts to join them in activities because they highly value their privacy, and relish the exclusive quality of their peer relationships. A younger sibling's persistent efforts to maintain a peer-like relationship with their maturing brother or sister is often experienced as intrusive. Relationships with older siblings changes as well. Younger siblings may experience some jealousy and resentment toward their older siblings when they perceive an inequity between an older sibling's freedom and privileges, and their own. By middle adolescence, they become closer to their older and younger siblings who are nearest to their own age. The majority of individuals in late

adolescence and early adulthood eventually reconcile their differences and relationships with siblings.

2.1.4 Adulthood: In a study conducted by **Connidis and Campbell (1995)** it was found that siblings were the potential sources of financial, physical, emotional, and psychological support because of their shared past, and because they were typically close in age. There are four consistent findings in the adult sibling relationship. *First*, sibling contact and closeness is greater between sisters than in brother-brother or brother-sister combinations. Overall, women are more likely to be the ones to initiate and maintain kin ties, including those with siblings. *Second*, geographic proximity is a key factor in predicting the extent of adult sibling interaction. When siblings live close to one another they maintain contact, exchange goods and services, and support one another to a greater degree than when they live apart. *Third*, there is a curvilinear relationship between age and feelings of closeness, contact, and meaningfulness of the sibling tie. Relations are close during early and middle childhood; they decrease slightly during adolescence and middle age, and increase as individuals near the end of the life cycle. Fourth, sibling ties appear to be more salient for the unmarried and childless than for those who are currently married and those with children **(Campbell, Connidis, and Davies 1999).**

2.1.5 Old age: Siblings serve as a special kind of attachment figure to one another in later life. Although their physical presence may not be sought frequently, older adults sincerely believe that a sibling would come to their aid in a crisis, regardless of whether they do or do not get along well. Reminiscences about family experiences validate the older person's memories and feelings about these events and help them to have positive feelings about their family life. In contrast **Pau-Ching Lu (2007)** found that sibling ties in general provide more help in the form of social companionship and emotional support, and less in instrumental support. Furthermore, sibling contact and sibling support both vary inversely with age. In comparison to people in young adulthood and middle age, older people have less contact with siblings, and they also receive less assistance from siblings.

2.2 Importance of siblings

From childhood to old age, each stage of life has different characteristics of sibling relationships. Elder siblings help, care and protect the younger ones when their parents are busy or not at home. In this way siblings are likely to spend a lot of time together therefore an understanding of their role and value in each other's lives is important. As stated by **Lewin and Sharp (2011)** siblings are not just because of the relation to the parents, but have a profound importance in their own right. Siblings have significant benefits possibly because they share memories and a sense of family identity, people with siblings do have a higher life satisfaction and lower rates of depression in old age. In times of illness or crisis, siblings provide emotional and psychological support to each other. This exchange of support is common between siblings who live far away as well as those who live together. Other than this, there are some areas in which siblings have a major role in the lives of one another.

2.2.1 Socialization

After mother, the siblings are the first playmates of child. Elder brothers and/or sisters help their younger ones to learn skills like empathy which help them to understand the handling of problems. Siblings teach each other essential social skills, such as how to manage conflicts and negotiate with others. By observing siblings they learn social behavior. Parents teach the social norms for example, how to act in public. Siblings are role models of the more informal behaviors for example how to act at school or on the street, how to behave with friends and this constitutes the vast experiences of children's life. Siblings can use these skills in their social circles and create healthy relationships with people outside their immediate family.

2.2.2 Academic success

When the younger sibling begins school, the older sibling may help him or her in familiarizing and gives advice on the new struggles that come with being a student. Having an older sibling who values academic effort, succeed in the school domain, and is willing to help a younger sibling's academic efforts may provide a powerful role model for younger siblings to identify with and emulate. Siblings help each other in homework or motivate one another to get success. Academics success is positively associated with the support from a sibling (**Smith 1990; Smith 1993; Yeh & Lempers, 2004).** In the household where parents are working, siblings, especially older ones serve as role models for developing study habits of the younger ones.

2.2.3 Personality

According to Kluger (2011) siblings are role models for each other and often influence the development of personality traits like extraversion or introversion; careless or studious types; shy or the family entertainer. The learning process of older sibling precedes that of the younger ones. Hence, he acquires skills before younger siblings. When he compares himself to his younger sibling he understands his stronger abilities which make him more confident and a stronger leader. The first child also receives more care, nurturance and attention than the younger one which makes the second child more insecure, attention seeking, rebellious or competitive. On the other hand, the youngest sibling might become spontaneous and sociable. Thus siblings influence the personality of each other on the basis of the sequence of birth order. Siblings have many conflicts, but the conflicts help to develop skills in perspective taking, understanding emotions, negotiating, persuasion, and problem solving all of which are strong personality determinants **(Brown, Donelan-McCall, & Dunn, 1996; Dunn, 2007; Howe, Rinaldi, Jennings, & Petrakos, 2002).**

2.2.4 Competition

It is quite common for siblings to compete and fight with one another for insignificant issues like parental love, approval, attention or an attempt to excel each other. The parents often tend to praise one child excessively or unrealistically in front of other child. Facing these situations constantly, might make the child resentful. If these comparisons continue and become intense for children, it can turn out to be a source of frustration for both siblings and parents. Competition among siblings, if unhealthy, can become a negative aspect of sibling relationships.

2.2.5 Comfort and support

Siblings spend lot of time together which can build close bonds between them. Siblings gradually do begin to value their relationship more and develop relationships of love, warmth, comfort and support. Children who have trusting relationships with their siblings might feel more secure and supported as they develop into adults. Through their relationships with siblings, children learn skills such as conflict resolution and negotiation. Siblings are often a source of emotional support for one another. In healthy relationships, siblings help one another overcome difficulties by listening to grievances and offering advice. This support is often vital for siblings during times of adversities, including parental discord, divorce and peer group conflict. Siblings often share private and difficult information with each other that gives them a feeling that they are not alone.

2.2.6 Communication skills

Being surrounded with older siblings, interacting with them helps the younger ones to strengthen their communication skills. They work as a role models for younger siblings, when they give orders, instructions, crack jokes, read out something, interact with others, the child observe all these and absorbs the information. While parents are also models for language and communication skills, siblings are close to each other with respect to developmental stages and therefore more

likely to become role models as they identify with them. **Brody (2004)** affirmed in an article that interactions with older siblings promote young children's language and cognitive development, their understanding of other people's emotions and perspectives, and, conversely, their development of antisocial behavior.

2.3 Determinants of sibling relationship

2.3.1 Developmental stages

The quality of the sibling relationship changes as one grows older. The available literature indicates strong ties of affection between siblings during childhood and adolescence. However, siblings become more distant during early and middle adulthood because of competing demands from work and family. Yet in old age, after children are launched from their parents' home, siblings have increased contact and greater intimacy **(Connidis, 1992; Bedford, 1998).** Again, **White (2001)** found that getting married and having children decreased sibling contact and exchange among siblings.

2.3.2 Gender

Gender also seems to influence expression of sibling closeness. Sisters are more likely to provide support and have close ties with their sibling than brothers. Sister dyads tend to be the most intimate, than the other combinations. Male are less likely to reveal their feelings toward siblings than female, but they may, nonetheless, hold sentiments of value and affection as deeply as females do **(Cicirelli, 1993).** During the period of adolescence, mixed-sex sibling pairs often experience more drastic decreases in intimacy while same-sex sibling pairs experience a slight rise in intimacy followed by a slight drop. In both instances, intimacy once again increases during young adulthood **(Brody 1994, Buhrmester 1990, Kim 2006).**

2.3.3 Economic inequality

Relationships among siblings have indicated that brothers and sisters relate to each other in a rivalrous way, on issues like achieving better grades in education, higher socio economic status, within the family unit. This effect is most pronounced when the siblings have jobs of superior status Thus, when one sibling seems to pull ahead in these areas, the relationship can become strained. Studies show that having a sibling with higher economic status has a negative impact on the relationship. Similarly **Connidis (2007)** also found that economic inequality was differentially related to sibling relationship quality as a function of the source of economic advancement. Sibling relationships were more positive where younger siblings were more economically advantaged primarily through marriage. On the other hand relationships were more negative when the economic condition was the result of personal success (i.e., employment).

2.3.4 Personality of siblings

Personality of the children affects their relationships with siblings. Ina typical family, each sibling wants attention and will fight to receive it. For example the one who is being pampered and having all the privileges will become more demanding, more dominating which in turn worsen one's relationship with the sibling who is not like the other one. In early and middle childhood, firstborns or older siblings typically assume a dominant role, and younger siblings hold the follower or less powerful role **(Buhrmester & Furman, 1990; McElwain &Volling, 2005).** This differential environment of children in the same family affects each child differently and can be the reason of personality differences among siblings.

2.3.5 Family environment

The quality of sibling relationships is strongly influenced by the family environment. Many parents still believe in the myth that their children should naturally just get along, love and

support of each other. However, this natural amity is much more fiction than fact. Rivalry between siblings can become especially pronounced when one of the children has a disability or the family is son-centered. In the second case, girls get more affected because the parents then spend more time with their sons. Other than this the marital and family processes, such as spousal conflict, co-parenting, and parenting behaviors, are better predictors of sibling relationship qualities than family status **(O'Connor, Hetherington, & Reiss, 1998)**. Findings also show that hostility and conflict in the marital subsystem and negativity in parent – child relationships are linked to sibling conflict **(Kim, McHale, Osgood, &Crouter, 2006)** and violence **(Hoffman, Kiecolt, & Edwards, 2005).** Family systems influences on sibling relationships also have been studied via mothers' and fathers' differential treatment of siblings. Systemic family influences are evident in investigations of mother – father patterns of differential treatment and their implications for siblings **(Kan, McHale, &Crouter, 2008).**

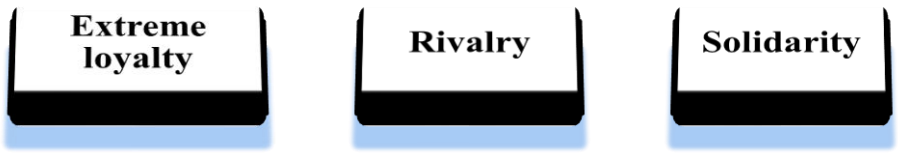
2.3.6 Life experiences

In a study conducted by **Connidis (1992)** it was found that sibling ties were heightened when divorce, widowhood, or health problems occurred. These experiences can affect sibling closeness and the frequency of contact among siblings. However, when siblings married or had children, the relationship did not change. The sibling bond is often complicated and is influenced by factors such as parental treatment, birth order, personality, and people and experiences outside the family **(Leder, 2004).**

2.4 Kinds of Sibling Relationships

2.4.1 Bank and Kahn (1997) described three kinds of sibling relationships:

Figure 2.4.1: Kinds of sibling relationships



2.4.1.1Extreme loyalty

It involves putting a sibling first, even above loyalty to spouse and children—and a willingness to make enormous sacrifices. Examples include taking a brother into one's home indefinitely or acting as a parent to a sister. This type of attachment usually develops in childhood when there is a disintegration of the family, physical or psychological absence of parents. The siblings adhere to each other to create a more stable environment and this extreme dependency on sibling could hinder the identity development or relationships with others.

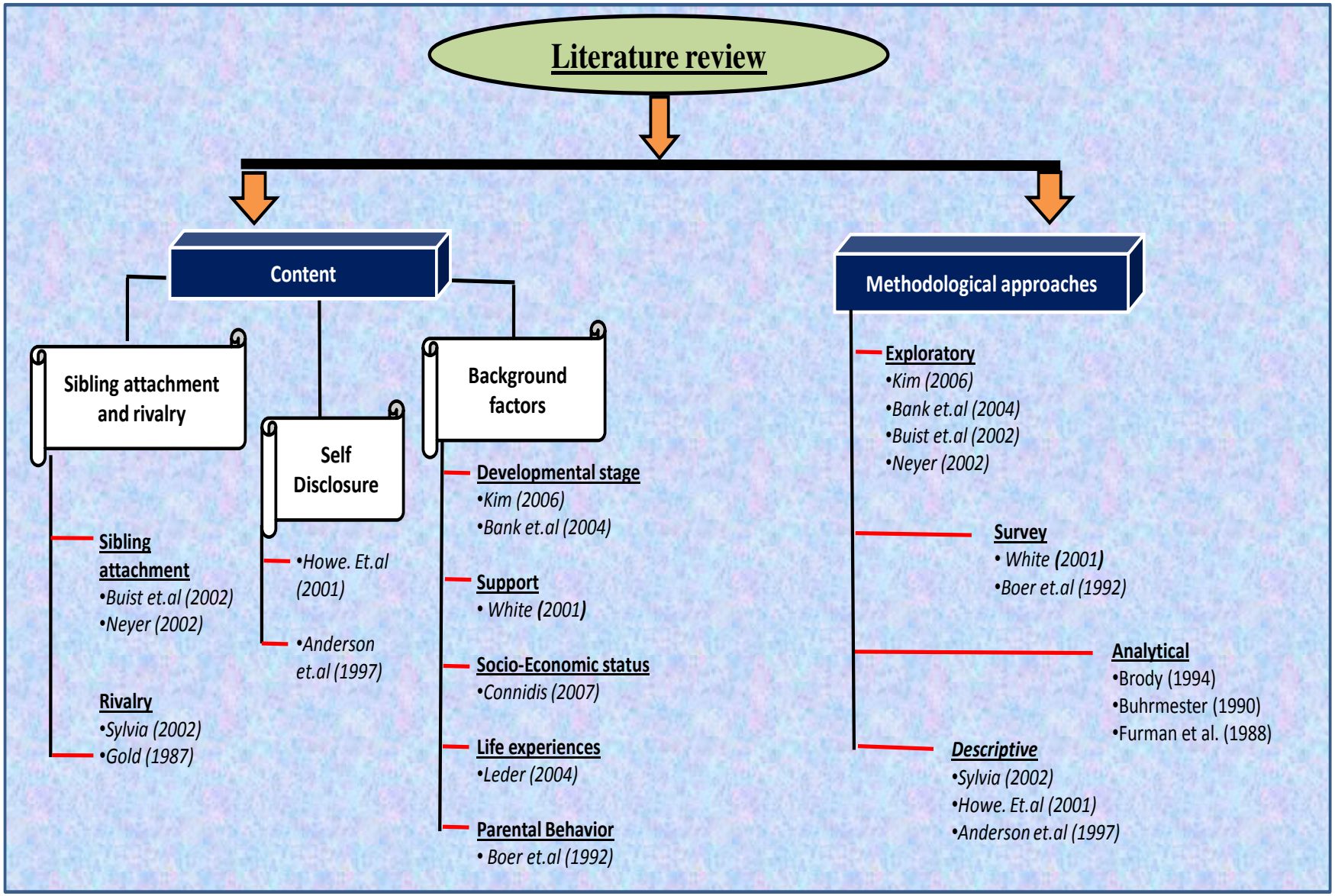
2.4.1.2 Rivalry

Rivalrous relationships are characterized by jealous competition among siblings especially for affection, attention and recognition of their parents which ultimately results in souring their relationships. The rivalry between siblings begins in childhood sometimes lasts into adulthood. Where sibling rivalry has been dominant, a person may become obsessed with comparing achievements or failures throughout life with the rivaled brother or sister. The acceptance of the degree of sibling rivalry in families varies culture to culture.

2.4.1.3 Solidarity

This is the ideal kind of bond between siblings in which there is a sense of cohesiveness and emotional closeness with brothers and or sister. As older people observe the aging and deaths of their parents and siblings, their sense of belonging may be threatened. They strengthen ties with remaining family members to preserve their sense of belonging to the family system of their childhood, including their brothers and sisters. It may not develop if there were no significant interaction early in life with siblings. Lack of closeness because of significant age differences between children in a family or an unresolved conflict can be examples of this.

Section 3: Review of Literature



3.1 Sibling attachment & Rivalry

3.1.1 Sibling attachment

Buist et al. (2002) found a nonlinear change in the attachment relationships from early to late adolescence, with a sharp increase in the sibling attachment bond around the time when younger siblings joined their older siblings in secondary school, perhaps because of their newly shared environment and experiences.

Studies have suggested that characteristics of siblings and of the dyad, including shared experiences and empathy, may undergird attachment relationships between siblings. **(Neyer 2002; Tancredy& Fraley 2006).**

3.1.2 Sibling rivalry

According to **Sylvia (2002)** sibling rivalry is particularly intense when children are very close in age and of the same gender, or where one child is intellectually gifted.

The greatest sibling rivalry tends to be shown between brothers, and the least between sisters. **Gold (1987)** has found that the root of rivalry between brothers is the notion of parental and societal comparison. In the case of boys, it seems far more natural to compare them, especially more than with sister/brother pairs. Even the fundamental developmental markers like who walk or speaks first become the basis of rivalry issues and this comparison appears to continue from school to college to the workplace.

3.2 Self disclosure

Perception of warmth in sibling relationships is also related to an increased likelihood for a sibling to self-disclose. This is because of the shared history and environment that is often characteristic of the sibling relationship. A study conducted by **Howe et al. (2001)** found that self-disclosure was

positively associated with feeling good about sharing and negatively associated with reports of not trusting or not receiving emotional support from their sibling. Female children demonstrated greater emotional understanding than male.

Results of a study carried out by **Anderson et al. (1997)** showed that self-disclosure was positively related to perceive understanding. Analyses involving sex of the individuals in the sibling dyad showed several differences. For men, besides honesty, the only other significant results were intentionality of self-disclosure for brothers communicating with their sisters and positiveness of self-disclosure for brothers communicating with their brothers. In contrast, intentionality, amount, positiveness, and honesty of self-disclosure were all significantly related for women communicating with their brothers and their sisters.

3.3 Background factors

3.3.1 Developmental periods

The sibling relationship in childhood was more as a companion to one another as stated by **Furman et al. (1988)**. Further it was followed by antagonism, admiration of sibling, and quarreling. These positive and negative qualities of the relationship were independent of one another, illustrating the ambivalence and complexity of sibling interaction. Younger siblings reported that they feel more affection, closeness, and respect for older siblings.

The period of adolescence is marked by increased conflict and emotional distance. However, this effect varies based on sex of siblings. Mixed-sex sibling pairs often experience more drastic decreases in intimacy during adolescence while same-sex sibling pairs experience a slight rise in intimacy during early adolescence followed by a slight drop. In both instances, intimacy once again increases during young adulthood. This trend may be the result of an increased emphasis on peer relationships during adolescence. Often, adolescents from the same family adopt differing lifestyles

which further contributes to emotional distance between one another **(Brody (1994), Buhrmester (1990), Kim (2006).**

It is also been suggested that positive sibling influences can promote healthy and adaptive functioning while negative interactions can increase vulnerabilities and problem behaviors. Intimate and positive sibling interactions are an important source of support for adolescents and can promote the development of pro-social behavior. However, researches unveil that when sibling relationships are characterized by conflict and aggression, they can promote delinquency, and antisocial behavior among peers **(Tucker et al. (1999).**

Gold (1987) found that interactions with sisters and brothers increased in late life. A shared history of lifetime experiences made the sibling relationship unique in social networks in old age. Those who had positive relationships with siblings found that interactions decreased feelings of loneliness, provided emotional support and validation of earlier life experiences, and built feelings of closeness and sibling solidarity. Even those who had negative sibling relationships indicated a shift in feelings.

White (2001), on the other hand, found that getting married and having children decreased sibling contact and exchange among siblings.

Scharf et al. (2005) reported that sibling relationships in early adulthood seemed to be less tied to the quality of parental relationships as compared to their adolescent respondents.

3.3.2 Support

White (2001) reported that giving and receiving help and assistance increasingly declined between the ages of twenty and seventy for siblings living close to one another. When siblings lived close by, help was given more often by those with higher education; when there were more siblings in the family, help was more often given by sisters; and help was less likely to be given when parents were still alive.

3.3.3 Socio economic status

In a study conducted by **Connidis (2007)** it was found that economic inequality was differentially related to sibling relationship quality as a function of the source of economic advancement. In one family, where economic advancement was the result of personal success (i.e., employment) on the part of older siblings, the relationship between older and younger siblings suffered, and younger siblings reported more ambivalent feelings. In contrast, in a second family where younger siblings were more economically advantaged primarily through marriage and not necessarily personal success, sibling relationships were more positive.

3.3.4 Life experiences

Another research carried out by **Connidis (1992)** revealed about some life experiences that affect sibling closeness and relations, or increase the frequency of contact among adult siblings. He found that sibling ties were heightened when divorce, widowhood, or health problems occurred. However, when siblings married or had children, the relationship did not change.

Leder (1993) study shows the sibling bond is often complicated and is influenced by factors such as parental treatment, birth order, personality, and people and experiences outside the family.

Establishing an independent residence is one traditional marker of adulthood for an individual. It is speculated that the nature of the relationship would affect the reaction to an older sibling leaving home; individuals with warm and supportive relationships may experience a sense of loss as older siblings move into adult roles **(Furstenberg et al. 2003).**

Older siblings who are self-supporting serve as positive role models for younger siblings entering the workplace, and siblings with similar work interests may develop closer relationships. Regardless, the timing and nature of work force participation may vary widely among siblings in the same family,

and these differences can affect their relationships as siblings compare their situations **(Downey, 1995).**

As young adult siblings negotiate new roles and responsibilities within new contexts, such as higher education and work, they also incorporate new relationships into their primary social sphere. As a result, family relationships, including those between siblings, become less central to everyday life. Indeed, **Scharf et al. (2005)** found individuals in the transition to adulthood reported spending less time with their siblings than during adolescence. Young adults also reported less conflict and more warmth with their siblings than adolescent respondents.

3.3.5 Parental behavior

Parents' differential treatment of siblings is consistently linked with negative child outcomes, including poor socio-emotional well-being and less positive sibling relationships. A study of the relation between parental behaviors and sibling behaviors found that negative parental care (hostile/detached behavior) was associated with sibling quarreling/antagonism among children in middle childhood. Differential treatment by mothers is associated with more conflicted and hostile sibling relationships **(Boer, Goedhart, and Treffers 1992).**

Section- 4

An Overview of Research Proposal

4.1 Need of the study

Most individual grows up in a family and have at least one brother or sister. The relationship of siblings' manifests conflicts and rivalry as well as it is one of the most intimate and closest relationships an individual has from childhood to old age **(Buhrmester & Furman, 1990; Volling, 2003).** The relationship with sibling comprises of a balance of both pro-social and conflictual interactions which create experiences that are most likely to nurture children's social, cognitive, and psychosocial development. This relationship begins very long before one has met their spouse and continues after one's parents have died. Sibling relationships have their own importance in each stage of the family life cycle. Hence, the expectations and exchanges in old age are different from those at earlier ages. This is one of those areas which are not yet explored by Indian researchers.

During early and middle childhood, most siblings live together however during and life after that physical proximity reduces due to education and marriage. In a study, **Cicirelli (1991)** found almost two-thirds of adults feel that they were close to their grown-up siblings and 78 percent felt they got along well with them. Developmental differences have been found in sibling relationships and its quality does appear to change over time. **Cole & Kearns (2001)** also found that sibling relationships become less emotionally intense across middle childhood and adolescence, with less warmth and conflict reported by older adolescents than elementary-school children. On the other hand, **Brody et al. (1994)** revealed an increase in conflict and decrease in positive sibling involvement over the period from middle childhood to adolescence. Thus the results of the researches in this area are not consistent. Moreover little is known about sibling relationships in Indian families which are unique with respect to intimacy, family life conditions, cohesiveness, expectations and dependency.

The effects of early parental death on psychological adjustment are well-established, but little is known about how parental bereavement influences siblings. For example, there is evidence that parental death during adulthood draws some siblings closer together while making other siblings more distant **(Scharlach & Fuller-Thomson, 1994)** but very few studies have investigated adult sibling relationships when parental death occurs earlier in life.

White (2001) argues that siblings may become more central members of the social network in response to life events such as widowhood, divorce, or parental death. When people experience adult transitions where they lose relationships with close family members, siblings may move back into the inner circle to fill the space once held by the lost individual. Accordingly, the picture of sibling relationships that emerges from this perspective is that brothers and sisters are permanent but flexible members of the kinship system whose placement in the individual's social network changes over time in response to different circumstances and life events. This aspect of sibling relationship needs to be investigated.

Adolescents who have a positive relationship with their sibling are more likely to experience warmth, encouragement, and support which results in the development of self-worth, competence, and self-confidence (**East & Rook, 1992; Yeh & Lempers, 2004).** It is believed that sibling intimacy declines, once the grownup children leave home because they do not nurture them as they get involved in education, occupation and personal family life. Instead every relationship requires constant nourishment, as well as mutual respect which become difficult due to multidimensional involvement.

In this contemporary world, it would be interesting to find whether the pattern of sibling relationships has changed or not. The dynamics among brothers and sisters are complex and diverse which can reveal interesting facts. The fact that sibling relationships vary widely according to children's status within the family and such other factors as family size, gender, and age, makes the topic daunting to many potential researchers.

4.2 Justification of the problem

Even though, sibling relationship is the long lasting relationship yet hardly any empirical researches have been done to study sibling relationships in Indian context. Therefore the present researcher wishes to conduct a cross sectional study on sibling relationships for a wide coverage of respondents at one time.

4.3 Statement of the problem

"A Cross Sectional Study of Dynamics of Sibling relationships"

4.4 Operational definitions

Cross sectional study: It involves the analysis of data collected from the population in different developmental stages at one time.

Dynamics: Changes and evolution over the period of time.

Sibling Relationships: It involves "actions, verbal and nonverbal communications between individuals who share the same biological parents (Cicirelli, 1991)."

4.5 Objectives of the study

1. To assess the sibling relationships from childhood to old age on selected dimensions (*Relationship pattern that is indicated by- Communication pattern, Support, Intimacy and Disclosure pattern*) of study.

2. To study the pattern of relationships in same and mixed gender sibling dyads.

3. To examine the effect of various factors (*marriage, employment, geographic proximity, parenthood, parental death*) on sibling relationships.

4.6 Methodology

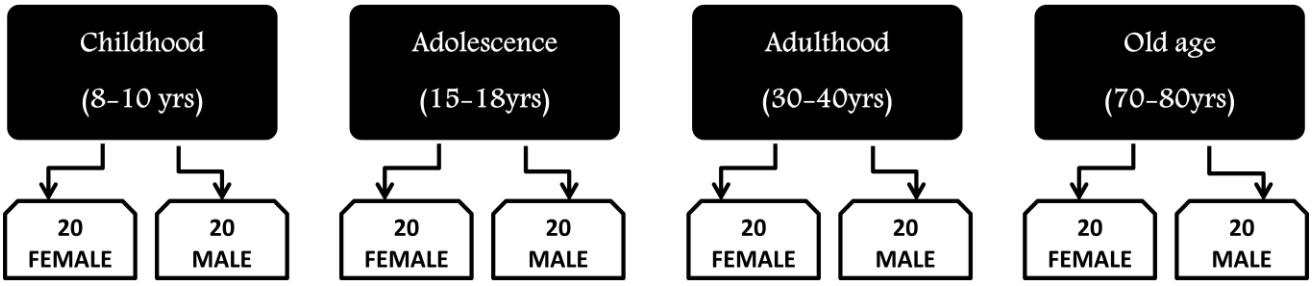
4.6.1 Locale of the study: Agra city will be purposively selected as a locale of study.

4.6.2 Sampling Technique:

Selection of sample

- ✓ The snowball sampling technique will be used in the selection of participants.
- ✓ The study will have a cross sectional data, the participants will be from stages of childhood (8-10yrs), adolescence (15-18yrs), adulthood (30-40yrs) and old age (70-80 yrs). A sample of 40 elements from each stage of development will be selected by snowball sampling technique.
- ✓ The selection of the referred sibling (sibling whose relationship is reported by the element of study) will be done by lottery method. Thus if the subject has four siblings, he/she will report his/her relationships with the sibling whose name is selected through lottery method.

Figure 4.6.2.1: Distribution of subjects across the age groups



Criteria of selection of sample for study

- ✓ Selected subject must belong to the specified stage of life span.
- ✓ Element selected for the study must have at least one sibling.
- ✓ There should be no special child in the family.
- ✓ The referred sibling must be alive at the time of data collection.

4.6.3 Variables of the study

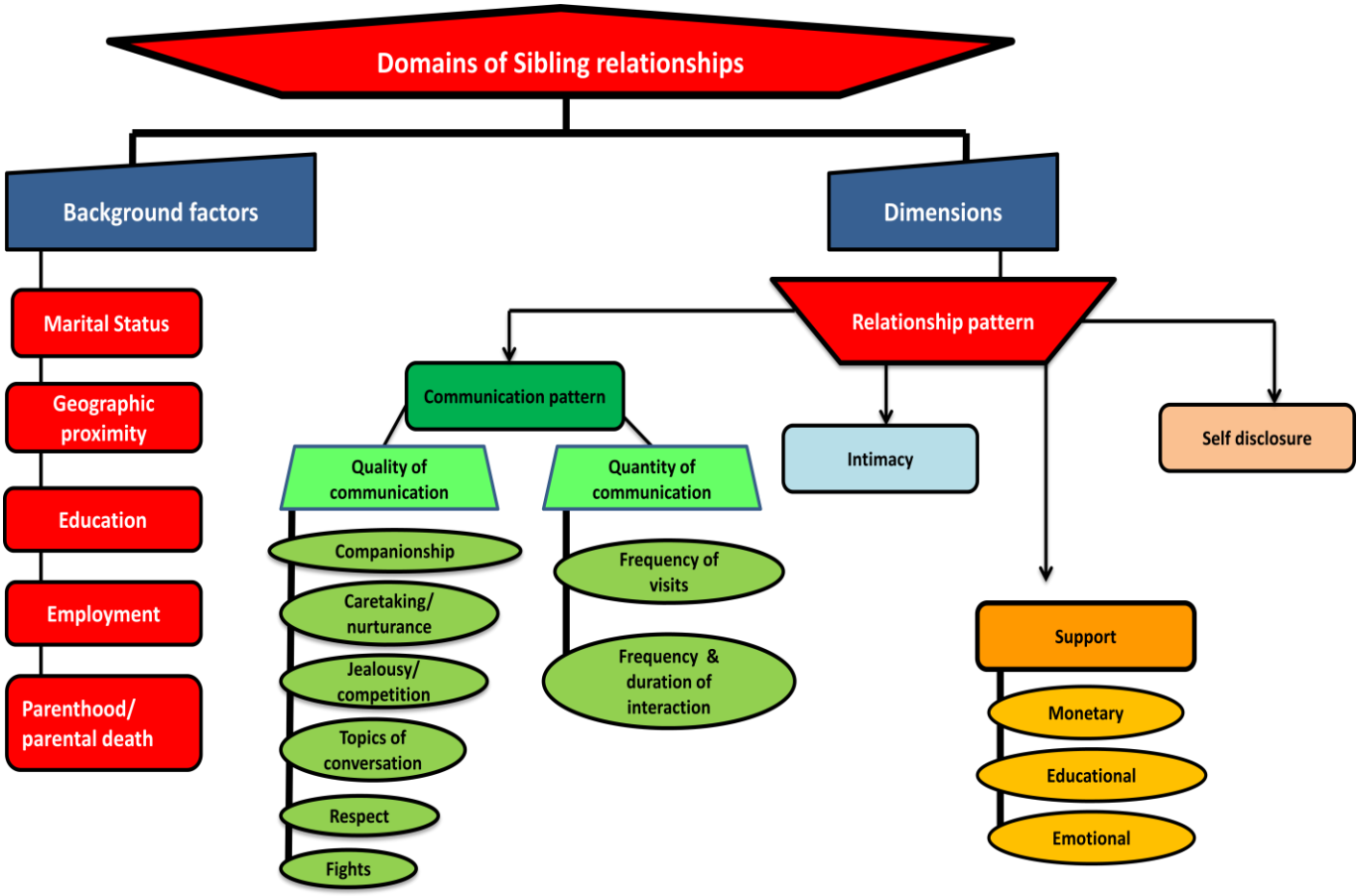
- ✓ **Dependent variable**- Sibling Relationships
- ✓ **Independent variable**- Age, Gender, Birth order, Number of siblings, Family size, Presence/absence of parents

4.6.4 Research design

Survey method will be adopted to assess the pattern of sibling relationships across the specified developmental stages. It facilitates comparability between respondents and it would be useful in research of this kind which has a wide coverage of respondents. For the present study, a cross sectional survey will be used which enables the researcher to collect the information from elements across different developmental stages at the same time.

4.6.5 Areas to be covered in the study

Figure 4.6.5.1: Domains of Sibling relationship



4.7 Tools of data collection

Assessment tools: Self constructed assessment tools are proposed to be used for domain wise assessment. The assessment tools will be prepared in the form of Personal data sheet, interview schedule and eco mapping as shown in figure 4.7.1. The details of assessment tools have been given in table 4.7.2 and figure 4.7.3.

Figure 4.7.1 Schematic representations of data collection tools

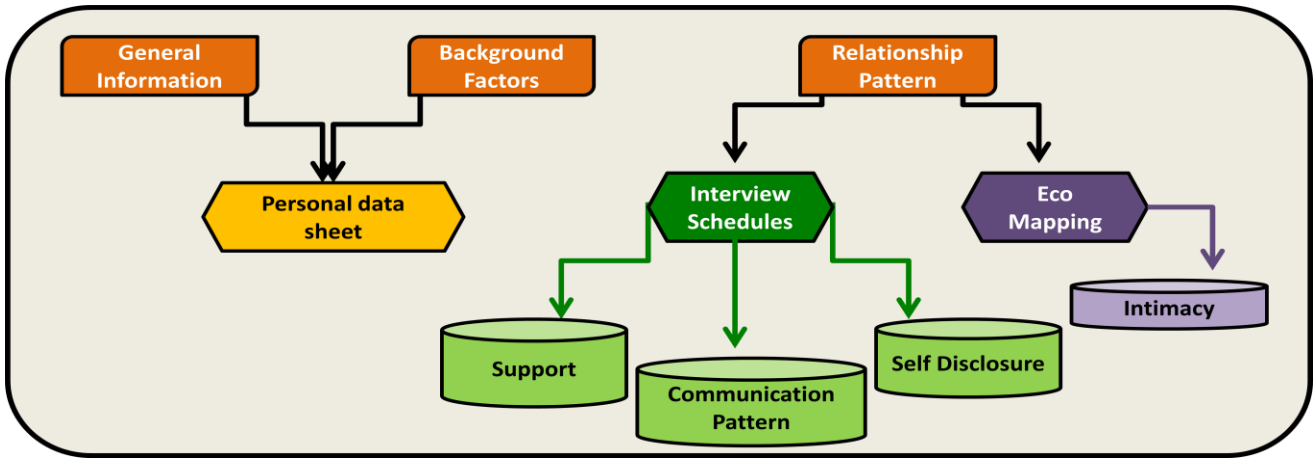


Table 4.7.2 Details of the assessment tools

Tool	Scale	Elements		Filled by
		Elements up to adolescents	Elements for adults	
GIBF	General information	Age		Researcher
		Gender		
		Birth order		
		Number of siblings		
		Number of Elder brothers	Geographic proximity	
		Number of Elder sisters	Economic difference	
		Number of Younger brothers	Presence of parents	
		Number of Younger sisters		
		Family type		
		Presence of grand parents		
		Presence of siblings at home		
		Received nursing care		
	Background factors	Education	Job	
		Parental attitude	Marriage	
			Parental death	
		Other significant relationship		

Tool	Type of tool	Scale		Elements		Conducted on
				Elements up to adolescents	**Elements for adults**	
RPIS (Relationship Pattern Interview Schedule)	Open ended interview schedule	Communication pattern	Quality of communication	Companionship		Participants
				Verbal/physical fights		
				Caretaking/nurturance		
				Respect		
				Jealousy/competition		
				Topics discussed and avoided		
			Quantity of communication	Frequency of face to face conversation	Frequency of interaction by telephone and internet	
				Presence of others during conversation		
				Frequency of visits		
		Support		Monetary		
				Educational		
				Emotional		
		Self disclosure				

Tool	Type of tool	Purpose	Administered on
IWS	Eco mapping	Assessment of intimacy with sibling	Participants
		Assessment of intimacy during developmental stages	

Figure 4.7.3 Eco Mapping sheets

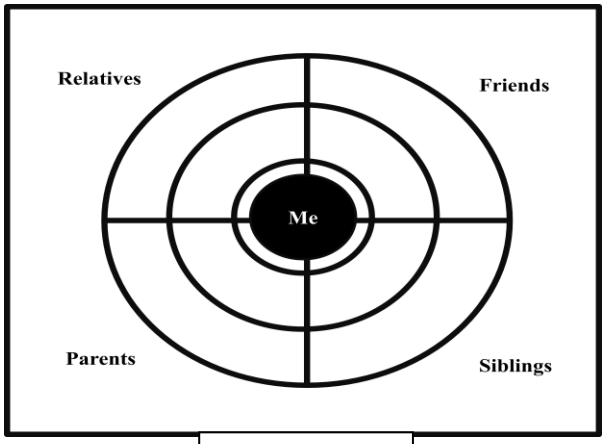


Figure 4.7.3.1

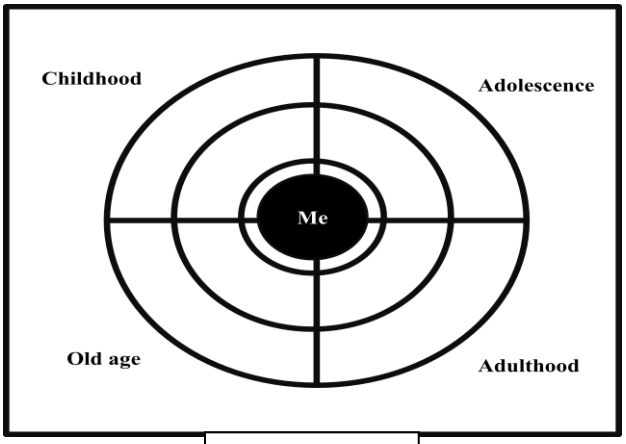


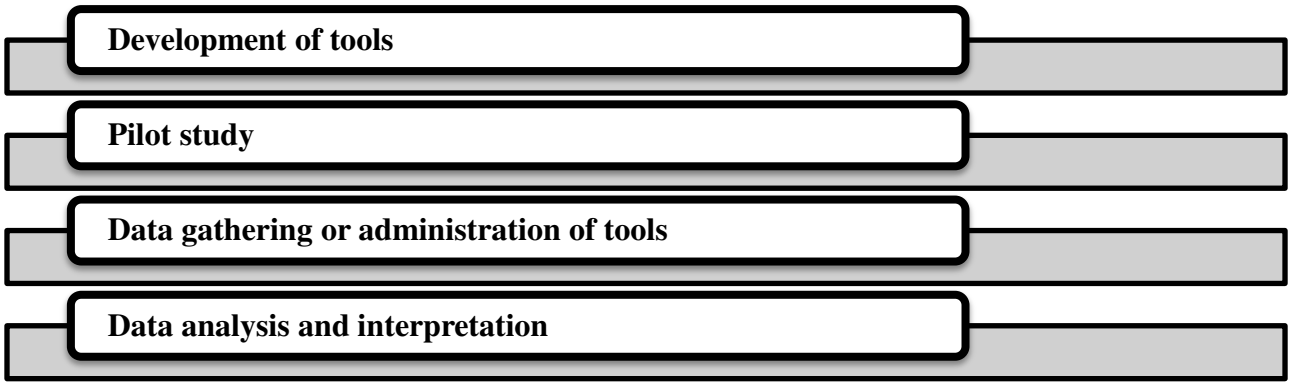
Figure 4.7.3.2

Eco mapping will be done by having a series of concentric circles with the subject's name in the center. In one sheet, the subject will be asked to fill the name of persons he is intimate with (Shown in fig.4.7.3.1). If the

subject places the name of the sibling close to the centre it depicts greater intimacy than when he places it further away from the centre. Similar information regarding family, friends, and relatives will also be obtained but for the present research the data regarding sibling will be considered and analyzed.

In another sheet, the subjects have to fill the name of their sibling in concentric rings at different stages of life (shown in fig. 4.7.3.2). This will help to study whether the siblings have come closer or moved further apart with age. Again, the closer to centre of circle the greater will be intimacy.

4.8 Procedure of the study



4.9 Statistical techniques for Analysis of data

The study is qualitative in nature hence statistical analysis will be restricted to calculation of percentage. Further analytical pattern will depend on nature of data obtained.

4.10 Delimitations of Study:

- The study will be conducted in Agra city only.
- The study will not include the stages of infancy and early childhood.
- The referred sibling of selected subjects must be alive.

Section V: References

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